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New York

Chairman: Erdenechuluun (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 57 to 81 ***(continued)***

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau at this session of the First Committee.

Very important events in the field of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have taken place this year. I am referring to the all-important decision of the international community to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In this respect, my country joined at an early date the 180 States, out of the 185 Members of the United Nations, which decided together to extend the Treaty indefinitely and unconditionally. This firm step taken by the majority of the international community consolidates the aspiration of many to a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

My country's efforts to build a reliable system for ensuring international peace and security are fully recognized by the international community. They are, in fact, a central pillar of the Argentine Republic's foreign policy, which first took shape in the context of our own region.

Together with Brazil, the Argentine Republic has made progress towards a thorough coordination of our respective nuclear policies. In this context, a series of bilateral agreements have been reached. The establishment of the first bi-national monitoring agency in the nuclear field — the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials — was a specific result of these agreements, as was the Quadripartite Agreement of complete safeguards with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Hence, our respective nuclear programmes are today transparent, not only as regards Argentina and Brazil, but also *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world. Since June 1994, joint inspections by the Brazilian-Argentine Agency and the IAEA have been carried out. Furthermore, my country promoted — in this case, alongside Brazil and Chile — those actions required to accede to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Today, over 30 years after its creation, the Treaty is being strengthened and extended, making it possible to envisage the consolidation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone covering Latin America and the Caribbean. In this framework, we welcome the fact that the Cuban Government has signed this international instrument. We firmly believe that all these regional milestones are effective means of strengthening the system of collective security established by the Charter of this Organization.

We view with extreme concern the conducting of nuclear-test programmes. We share the profound, collective international aspiration to see, in 1996, the completion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty, without time-limits or permissible exceptions. Absolutely committed to this goal, the Argentine Republic is actively participating in the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty. In this respect, my country will host, from 20 to 22 November

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1995, the workshop of the Group of Scientific Experts on seismic events, of the Conference on Disarmament. The aim is to interest and involve the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and Mexico in the third technical experiment of the Group of seismic experts by providing information on stations located on their territories, previously selected as auxiliaries, and for them to join under the best possible conditions the seismic-monitoring system of the future comprehensive test-ban treaty. I wish to stress that the organization of the workshop has been delegated to the National Institute for Seismic Prevention, headquartered in San Juan. It is being sponsored jointly by the Group of seismic experts and the Argentine Foreign Ministry.

Furthermore, we firmly support the determined initiation by the Conference on Disarmament of negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of fissionable material — the cut-off convention. We also urge the implementation of the decision by the Conference on Disarmament on the adoption of the report submitted during its plenary meeting on 12 August 1993. We recognize the legitimate aspirations of the candidate countries to participate fully in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, as established in resolution 49/77 B.

The Argentine Republic supports the Secretary-General's urgent appeal for full international compliance with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. On 2 October, my country deposited its instrument of ratification of this Convention. This is yet another step consistent with our non-proliferation philosophy. Through this act, Argentina consolidates externally measures already adopted domestically. I am referring to my country's decision to assume strict control of the exportation of chemical substances. This is being implemented through the equally stringent application of the regulations contained in Decree 603/92.

I wish to point out that the Argentina position was clearly reflected in the Mendoza Declaration, which was signed on 5 September 1991 by Argentina, Brazil and Chile. In that context, a thorough process of consultations has begun among the signatory countries with the aim of coordinating positions and drafting measures for the non-proliferation of this type of weapon in the region.

Argentina is participating in the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague. We are determined to play an active role in that organization. In this respect, we have already established domestically an interministerial group — with the participation of officials in the areas of defence, the economy and foreign relations — for the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in Argentina.

In this framework we should also include the International Seminar on the Non-Proliferation of Chemical and Bacteriological Weapons, held in Buenos Aires on 15 and 16 November 1994. Organized by the Argentine Republic, Australia, Canada, Norway and the United States, it aimed at an exchange of opinion among the countries of Latin America and the Australia Group. The Seminar was the first of its kind to be held in the region and was useful for an exchange of ideas on export controls as an element in the campaign against the proliferation of this type of weapon of mass destruction.

The Republic of Argentina attaches special importance to the Convention banning biological weapons. We would like the ad hoc group established by the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on bacteriological weapons to continue its work so that it will be possible to conclude a verification protocol that will improve and strengthen the Convention.

The Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons was concluded this month in Vienna. In this connection, I would like to inform the Committee that on 2 October of this year my country deposited its instrument of ratification of that international treaty. We regret that at the Conference it was not possible to reach agreement on strengthening Protocol II of that international instrument. On the other hand, we applaud the adoption of the text of the new Protocol of the Convention, on blinding laser weapons, in spite of its limited scope of application.

The Republic of Argentina has associated itself with the efforts made by this Organization to try to resolve the international humanitarian crisis brought on by the use of anti-personnel mines. My country pays especial attention to this subject because of its devastating consequences for the civilian population. In this connection, by its executive decree 435 of this year, Argentina endorsed resolution 48/75 K adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 1993 suspending the export, sale or transfer of all types of anti-personnel mines, without exception. Argentina imposed the ban for a period of five years.

We consider that resolution 49/215, entitled "Assistance in mine clearance", constitutes an important link in the international chain that has been established to eliminate the lingering effects of the planting of anti-personnel mines. We are deeply satisfied by the international community's response to this serious problem. The presence of 100 States and 60 organizations at the international gathering on mine clearance, held in Geneva from 5 to 7 July, clearly shows the will of States to increase their political and financial support for efforts to stop the spread of such weapons.

With pledges amounting to $22 million, as announced at that international gathering, the voluntary trust fund for assistance in mine clearance can become operational. In this context, Argentina requested at that international meeting that its contribution for the de-mining of the Malvinas be considered a contribution to that trust fund. It should be recalled that the trust fund was established under resolution 48/7, which was co-sponsored by my country and formally adopted on 19 October 1993 by the General Assembly.

Following this robust action by my country in this area, the Government of Argentina contacted the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, offering to take charge of clearing the mines planted in the Malvinas during the 1982 conflict. This offer has been reflected in document A/49/76, and, I reiterate, it is *ex gratia* in nature.

Similarly, on 9 August 1995 the Government of Argentina offered to the Mine Clearance and Policy Unit of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs the cooperation of qualified personnel of the Argentine armed forces for possible participation in every stage of mine clearance undertaken by the Organization.

The proliferation of conventional weapons urgently requires the constant attention of the international community. In this respect, sharing the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report, we believe that the regular submission of reports to the Register of Conventional Arms is a useful way of strengthening the system of mutual trust between States, through the reporting of legal transfers of conventional weapons by States for defence purposes.

Since the establishment of the Register of Conventional Arms, the Republic of Argentina has reported not only on its arms transfers but also on its stocks of military *materiel*. In this way we are strengthening, at the regional and international levels, the system of global security provided for in Chapter VIII of the Charter.

In order to control contraband in nuclear material, States must take internal measures, such as changing their accounting systems. We support the efforts made by the IAEA to deal with this alarming problem.

Finally, I wish to highlight the fact that all the actions taken by the Republic of Argentina to prevent the proliferation of chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic weapons constituted the ideological foundation for promoting in timely fashion, and within the framework of this Organization — more specifically, within the Security Council — the submission of a draft resolution ratifying the original jurisdiction of the Security Council with regard to non-proliferation, and updating the statement made in 1992 when the Heads of State rightly affirmed, in this building, that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction constituted a threat to international peace and security.

Mr. Starr (Australia): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of this Committee and to assure you of the full cooperation of the Australian delegation.

Half a century after the establishment of the United Nations, we can see clearly the imprint which it has left on international affairs, in particular on international security issues.

Unlike its predecessor, the League of Nations, whose entire life span amounted to a brief 20-year interval between two World Wars, the United Nations has taken root and matured to such an extent that today it is difficult, if not impossible, to envision a world without it.

What we have seen steadily and quietly growing over the past five decades, even through the depths of the nuclear shadows and proxy conflicts of the cold war, has been the habits of global community and collective security — a collective security which recognizes that a world operating according to agreed norms of international behaviour is infinitely preferable to international lawlessness; a collective security based on the belief that limited concessions of national freedom of action produce tangible benefits for the economic and political welfare of all; and, of critical importance, a vision of collective security to which the vast majority of the international community has been prepared to pledge itself and its resources.

It is the concrete and repeated renewal by individual States of that commitment to the international common good which has caused the United Nations to endure, just as certainly as it was lack of that same commitment which caused the League to founder. For the League did not founder on lack of ideals or mechanisms; rather, it foundered on a lack of concrete commitment to implement, maintain and, where necessary, refurbish these founding ideals. Within two decades, loss of energy among Member States, reflected in a series of political set-backs, none of which was fatal in itself, was sufficient to obliterate all the visionary promise of 1919 and the resolve to end wars.

I make these points not just because of our Organization's fiftieth anniversary, but rather because, in the year since we last met, the vast majority of States represented in this room participated in the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and agreed on a series of related measures — notably on the Principles and Objectives which we intend to follow in our future pursuit of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and on an enhanced treaty review process.

In a sense, the NPT — and the decision to extend it indefinitely — represent the best and most effective fruit of our post-war search for collective security. The Treaty has, during half the life of the United Nations itself, restrained the rush to nuclear proliferation and the emergence of new nuclear-weapon States. Even in the depths of the cold war, the commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons which it enshrines stood as a compelling rejection of the notion of vertical proliferation and of the nuclear arms race. We have now decided that the principles of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, on which we have agreed within the NPT, should be entrenched indefinitely and irrevocably; and we have called on those few States that still remain outside the community of the NPT to join with us under the authority of the Treaty in this task.

However, we will succeed in entrenching these principles only if, collectively, our deeds follow our words, if the undertakings we have all made in our collective interest are honoured faithfully. The real achievement of the Review Conference held in May in New York was, not simply to consolidate the nuclear non-proliferation achievements of the past, but to recommit ourselves to implementation of the Treaty in all its aspects in the decades to come, with the ultimate goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We have refurbished our objectives and renewed our commitment, and we must reinvigorate our pursuit of international security while the shadow of nuclear war still remains.

Our first commitment is clear, namely completion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty as soon as possible, and certainly no later than 1996. In practice, the treaty needs to be available for signature by the autumn of 1996, that is, at the commencement of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Our message to the Conference on Disarmament must be unequivocal if we are to achieve this goal. The Conference will have to sign off by the end of June 1996 on a completed text, which can then be forwarded to this body — meeting in reconvened session — for endorsement so that preparations for signature can commence by the outset of the fifty-first session in September.

We all know that the window of political opportunity demands pursuit of such a time-frame, and that there is a convergence of views on this matter among negotiators. We all appreciate the potency of the political symbolism in the fact that in one of its last acts at its fiftieth session, the General Assembly would endorse our collective determination to end nuclear testing for ever. Thus, Australia looks forward to joining with others this year, under the leadership of Mexico, in presenting a draft resolution which seeks to entrench these expectations as the collective and consensus view of the international community.

We also call on all delegations to recognize that the achievement of this negotiating objective will require a determined effort and a basic desire to reach consensus, particularly on the scope of the agreement. Australia, together with the great majority of the other negotiators, has sought a truly comprehensive "zero yield" ban on tests. We are now close to having all five of the permanent members of the Security Council on record as accepting a "zero yield" ban. We call for the consolidation of this consensus, and for this to be expressed in final convergence on the text of the scope article before the intersessional negotiations in January. We do not have time for debilitating discussion at this late stage on whether or not we are, after all, really pursuing the comprehensive ban agreed in the negotiating mandate and called for by the international community.

At this critical stage in our collective search for a more secure world free of nuclear weapons and in the finalizing of the comprehensive test-ban treaty, the continuation of nuclear testing by China and the recommencement of nuclear testing by France in the South

Pacific are aberrations, belonging to a different era and to the logic of nuclear confrontation in a world we have deliberately and decisively put behind us.

Like the vast majority of the peoples and nations of the planet, Australia cannot accept the idea that continued or resumed nuclear testing — no matter who conducts it — can in any sense make it easier to consolidate recent progress in nuclear disarmament, to demonstrate the conclusive end to the nuclear arms race, or to achieve a comprehensive test-ban treaty. This was self-evident to us all in New York five months ago, and is reflected in the language we agreed upon here by consensus.

Australia congratulates those three nuclear-weapon States which are maintaining testing moratoriums. We condemn the decisions made by the Governments of the other two nuclear-weapon States to carry out nuclear explosions — in one case within days of the indefinite extension of the NPT. Australia has unequivocally condemned each subsequent nuclear test, regardless of where it has occurred. These test explosions fly in the face of the unambiguous wishes of the international community, and of the commitment undertaken by all nuclear-weapon States — expressed so clearly in article VI of the NPT — to pursue negotiations in good faith with a view to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

In matters of collective security and nuclear non-proliferation, it is not enough to enjoin the rest of the world to "do what I say, not what I do". We expect the General Assembly to pronounce in unambiguous terms on these tests, conveying clearly its intention that our collective pursuit of the future should not be encumbered by individual failures to let go of the past.

The refurbishment of international security objectives at the NPT Review Conference in May also included important progress in areas such as that of security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States, notwithstanding the procedural failure to conclude a final document reflecting the considerable progress made on this subject. States parties to the NPT separately noted the importance of Security Council resolution 984 (1995) and of the parallel declarations made by nuclear-weapon States. Furthermore, they had specifically agreed on the need to consider further steps — which could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument — to assure non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The consolidation and enhancement of international norms on security assurances would be an important step in reasserting and entrenching our common understanding that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States which are in compliance with binding and verified international non-proliferation instruments is unthinkable, and not to be tolerated. We look for this progress to be recognized in resolutions this year. We also look for progress in implementing further steps, in particular through further Security Council action, or the enhanced review process agreed upon for the NPT.

Australia supports the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable cut-off convention, banning the production of fissile material for explosive purposes, a further element of the nuclear disarmament programme agreed in May. It is clear to all concerned that the Conference on Disarmament has agreed on a negotiating mandate. We find it curious that after years of striving towards this objective, it is now some non-nuclear-weapon States that seem to have reservations regarding the commencement of negotiations, even though these would permit discussion of existing stocks. We have a window of opportunity now which we would be well advised not to squander.

We agreed, in New York in May, to the determined pursuit of global reduction of nuclear weapons, with the ultimate goal of their elimination, and of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. In Australia s view, the most appropriate forum in which to pursue and take stock of the concrete implementation of the first element of this undertaking will be the enhanced review process agreed for the Treaty, commencing in 1997, where all participants are committed to shared non-proliferation and disarmament objectives.

At the same time, we are not opposed to addressing issues of nuclear disarmament in other forums. We appreciate the value of unilateral, bilateral and plurilateral steps which might be taken, including those from internal discussions amongst the five nuclear-weapon States. We are sensitive to the need to draw all members of the international community — including current non-parties to the NPT — into a productive dialogue on how we might act in concert to progress towards the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

What is clear is the intention of the international community by 1997 to have well in hand, concrete

strategies to consolidate steps taken over the next two years, and to support plans of nuclear-weapon States to press forward with new significant cuts in nuclear-weapons holdings.

Concrete steps are being taken in promoting nuclear-weapon-free zones. In May, the States Parties to the NPT gave a resounding encouragement to the development of these zones. Australia welcomes expressions of support given by nuclear-weapon States to specific nuclear-weapon-free zones in that context. It welcomes in particular, indications from the United States that it is moving towards a final decision on adherence to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, a treaty which is of special importance and significance to Australia and its fellow South Pacific Forum members. We also call on the other nuclear-weapon States which have not yet adhered to the relevant protocols — France and the United Kingdom — to do so without further delay, recognizing the uncompromising support which the region has afforded to the cause of non-proliferation. Like other South Pacific Forum States, we urge France to close permanently its nuclear test facilities in the South Pacific.

We warmly acknowledge the hard diplomatic effort which has gone into completing adherence to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We welcome the conclusion of the negotiations for the African nuclear- weapon-free-zone treaty, and look forward to its early signature. The entry into force of this treaty will dramatically crystallize the important progress made in the last decade in rendering Africa a continent free of nuclear weapons. We look forward to the finalization by neighbours to our near north of negotiations to establish a South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone with the support of the nuclear-weapon States. We are, in effect, seeing the steady growth of a series of complementary regional arrangements — perhaps becoming even hemispheric in effect for the southern half of the globe — which underpin the international non-proliferation regime and give it a distinctive regional commitment.

In refurbishing our collective commitments, it is timely to reconsider how effectively our multilateral arms control and disarmament machinery has been responding. Australia was gratified that the Conference on Disarmament has been able to agree in principle to the expansion of its membership. Once implemented — and this decisive step should not be allowed to slip — it should give the Conference a renewed vigour and extended authority in addressing its various negotiating tasks.

Australia finds it curious and unacceptable, however, that in general our standing multilateral disarmament machinery continues to avoid dealing substantively with non-nuclear disarmament, most notably the problems posed by conventional weapons and forces. Disarmament, if it is to be effective, must affect us all. It must take in, not just the weapons systems which potentially threaten the continued existence of life on the planet, but also those which actually kill thousands annually in the real world.

We commend the contribution being made here by the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and wholeheartedly subscribe to the support for the exercise from our region reflected in the statement made by the Chairman of the ASEAN Regional Forum on 1 August 1995. On the other hand, we call on the Conference on Disarmament to cut through the procedural obstructions preventing such discussions in that forum, and on colleagues to consider also the possibility of reinvigorating the work of the Disarmament Commission to ensure new productive work in all these real issues.

Ad hoc forums such as the Review Conference on the inhumane weapons Convention also play important roles. We welcome agreement in Vienna to an additional Protocol for the Convention which would ban the use and transfer of blinding laser weapons. However, we were deeply disappointed that disagreement on a number of limited but significant advances in the protection of civilians from long-lived anti-personnel land-mines has not yet been achieved. Australia is committed to the elimination of all anti-personnel land-mines as an ultimate goal, and to the immediate implementation of practical medium-term measures which might advance us in some worthwhile way towards our collective objective. The Review Conference must succeed in its resumed sessions to take steps which will contribute, seriously, to preventing future humanitarian disasters.

In dealing with both nuclear and conventional disarmament issues, the mutually-reinforcing interaction of regional and global initiatives is important in consolidating progress. In Australia's neighbourhood, the ASEAN Regional Forum is making significant steps in demonstrating regional commitment to collective and cooperative security, and to habits of transparency and peaceful coexistence which will stand us in good stead for the future. Ongoing support by the United Nations — for example through the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, based in Kathmandu — for such regional development is important, and is appreciated.

Australia is also pleased to be able to participate in other regional initiatives, such as the Middle East Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group, which seeks creatively to underpin the Middle East peace process.

In my introductory comments I sought to emphasize the need for the international community, not simply to codify ideals, but to maintain an ongoing and concrete commitment to their implementation.

Nowhere is this more important today than in the context of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Many of us here were engaged in the historic push to conclude this, the first global multilateral instrument to provide a verifiable ban on a whole class of weapons, and to provide for their destruction. But to be effective in achieving the disarmament objectives of the negotiators, this instrument must be speedily ratified by the major possessors of stocks, namely Russia and the United States. Episodes of chemical terrorism have underlined to us that there is no room for complacency in international security issues such as these. The norm of chemical non-proliferation and the destruction of all chemical weapons established in the CWC needs to be asserted unambiguously and authoritatively by actions on the part of the majors, actions which effectively propel the treaty into force.

With regard to the biological weapons Convention, it is incumbent upon us to strive, despite the constraints of the international disarmament calendar, to develop a coherent and effective verification mechanism as rapidly as possible. Recent revelations made concerning previous activities by Iraq, indicative of systematic breaches of the Convention, graphically underscore the need to refurbish and reinforce the norms of the Convention, and to deter, emphatically, their future violation. It is not enough that we have a Convention in place; we must reinforce verifiable commitment to the implementation of its provisions.

We have an important international security agenda ahead at this fiftieth session of the General Assembly. In today's world, there is no viable alternative to a collective security built on mutual trust and collective commitment. There is no room for complacent reliance on past achievements or empty statements of ideals, for withdrawal from the process which continually shapes and implements international norms, or for disregard of the solemn political and legal commitments which are the basis of our security, present and future. There is room for imagination, and hard work, to capture fully the considerable opportunities of these times in which we are privileged to live. The Australian delegation will make every effort to contribute fully to this process.

Mr. Sha Zukang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you on behalf of the Chinese delegation on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee of the current session of the General Assembly. We have full confidence that with your outstanding talent and rich experience in diplomacy, you will guide the work of the Committee to success. Meanwhile, I wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections and express our thanks to His Excellency Ambassador Rodriguez of Ecuador for his contribution to the Committee during his tenure of the chairmanship for the last session.

The current session of the United Nations General Assembly is being held in the year that marks the fiftieth anniversary of victory in the world's anti-Fascist war and of the victory of China's War of Resistance against Japanese invasion, as well as of the founding of the United Nations. For half a century, the United Nations has made commendable efforts in the promotion of disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security. In this respect, the General Assembly has adopted numerous resolutions on nuclear disarmament, conventional disarmament, the prohibition of biological and chemical weapons, the checking of the arms race, prevention of the militarization of outer space, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace. The three special sessions devoted to disarmament and the Final Document adopted by the first special session on disarmament in particular, facilitated progress in the field of disarmament. In the United Nations and other multilateral forums, a series of important disarmament agreements, such as the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, were reached, thereby leading mankind step by step towards a world free of all forms of weapons of mass destruction.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, thanks to the efforts of all countries, further progress has been made in the field of disarmament and arms control. Five months ago, the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) decided to extend the Treaty indefinitely. That decision is conducive to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to the maintenance of international peace and security, and should give new currency to the process of nuclear disarmament. On the other hand, that decision should not interpreted as allowing the perpetual possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-

weapon States. Security Council resolution 984 (1995), on the provision of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, should serve as a new starting-point for negotiations on legally-binding international instruments on the non-use or non-threat-of-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. All participants in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament are working hard for the early conclusion of a good comprehensive test-ban treaty and have set up an ad hoc committee on the cut-off convention. Meanwhile, signatories to the Chemical Weapons Convention are intensifying their efforts to ratify it. However, we have to be aware of the fact that disarmament still has a long way to go. The existing treaties on nuclear-weapon reduction have yet to be implemented. The gigantic nuclear arsenals remain practically intact. Some nuclear-weapon States still insist on their policies of nuclear deterrence and are continuing with their research and development of space weapons. To promote the objective of the total prohibition and thorough destruction of all nuclear weapons, Mr. Qian Qichen, Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister of China, proposed at the last session of the General Assembly that a convention on the comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons should be concluded. He further put forward a comprehensive set of interrelated nuclear disarmament proposals, including the conclusion of a convention on the non-first-use of nuclear weapons through negotiations among the nuclear-weapon States. China expects to see a positive response from the countries concerned.

China supports the goal of a total ban on nuclear-weapon testing in the context of the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. China rejoices at the marked progress achieved on the comprehensive test-ban Treaty in less than two years of negotiations. China believes that that Treaty will be a step towards the ultimate goal of the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. The comprehensive test-ban Treaty should have a clearly defined scope providing a comprehensive ban on all nuclear-weapon-test explosions but it should not ban peaceful nuclear explosions or in any way restrict the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The verification regime of the treaty should be effective, fair and just. China welcomes the substantive progress made on the question of the international monitoring system and believes that the system should be able to provide effective global detection of events that are in violation of the future treaty. National technical means (NTM) have no place in this system, nor should they be a substitute for the international monitoring system. This is an important issue of principle bearing on all States parties and particularly on the realization of equal rights between developing and developed countries that have different levels of such technical means. Furthermore, to ensure the fairness of the verification regime, the organization to be set up under the comprehensive test-ban Treaty must approve requests for on-site inspections and reach conclusions after the inspection. I wish to reiterate here that China attaches great importance to the negotiations on the treaty and will continue to work with all other participating countries for the conclusion of a genuinely good comprehensive treaty as soon as possible, not later than in 1996.

China has long undertaken, unilaterally, not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or in any circumstances. It has also undertaken, unconditionally, not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones. We strongly appeal to all nuclear- weapon States to enter into immediate negotiations on the conclusion of a treaty on the non-first-use of nuclear weapons and on an agreement on the non-use or non-threat-of-use of such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones. These instruments would enhance international peace, stability and security, and therefore be in accordance with the fundamental interests of all countries. China attaches great importance to the issue of non-first-use of nuclear weapons. In this regard, China has presented to the other nuclear-weapon States a draft treaty on the non-first-use of nuclear weapons and calls on those countries to respond positively. In the post-cold-war era of today, it is obviously anachronistic to continue with the policy of nuclear deterrence based on the first-use of nuclear weapons, thereby subjecting other countries to the nuclear threat.

China's possession of a limited number of nuclear weapons is intended solely for self-defence and to fend off nuclear threats. China's nuclear weapons are not directed against any other country. China has no intention of participating, nor has it ever participated, in the nuclear-arms race. China does not belong to any military alliance, nor does it have any foreign nuclear umbrella. While China has long unilaterally undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, it has all along lived under the shadow of the threat of nuclear weapons. Despite this fact, China has exercised the utmost restraint in nuclear testing and supports a comprehensive ban on nuclear-weapon-test explosions. Once the comprehensive test-ban treaty enters into force, China will discontinue its nuclear-weapon testing.

China consistently supports the aspirations and efforts of the countries concerned in their endeavour to establish

nuclear-weapon-free zones through consultations in which there is equal participation and in the light of the specific conditions of each particular country. In this regard, the Latin American and South Pacific countries have achieved commendable results.

Recently, we have seen welcoming progress in efforts on the part of the African countries with regard to the establishment of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone. China resolutely supports the Treaty on an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and will assume its due obligations regarding the African zone, in keeping with its consistent position. It is also our hope that all nuclear-weapon States will equally respect the States of nuclear-weapon-free zones and undertake their due obligations.

The Geneva Conference on Disarmament has set up the Ad Hoc Committee for the cut-off convention. China is ready to work with all the other countries concerned to push forward the work of the Conference on Disarmament in a balanced manner and to contribute to the conclusion of a fair and practicable cut-off convention that will enjoy universal participation and that will be beneficial to the process of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Ever since the Chemical Weapons Convention was opened for signature, we have seen an increasing number of countries ratifying the Convention. Thanks to the joint efforts of various signatories and the Provisional Technical Secretariat, progress has been achieved on many issues concerning the future implementation of the Convention. Together with all other countries concerned, China will continue to work for a satisfactory solution of such issues as abandoned chemical weapons, challenge inspection and article 11 of the Convention. China supports the purpose and objectives of the Convention and was one of the first signatories. China is now actively preparing for early ratification of the Convention.

China has earnestly and fully implemented its obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention, and has annually reported to the United Nations the required data relevant to the Convention. China supports measures that would strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention. In the light of the special characteristics of biological weapons and the complexity of verification, it is imperative to discuss and formulate necessary definitions and objective criteria, including lists of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins, so as to clearly differentiate the prohibited activities from those allowed. Only on this basis can there be a meaningful exploration of effective and practicable verification measures. The quick-fix approach of verification for verification's sake will not help enhance the effectiveness of the Convention.

At the recently concluded Review Conference of the Convention on certain conventional weapons, agreement was reached on the addition of a new protocol on the prohibition of blinding weapons. Though falling short of agreement, progress has been made by States parties on amending Protocol II, on land-mines. China is always in favour of humanitarian efforts on the part of the international community to prevent the harm and killing caused to innocent civilians by land-mines. However, at present when the threat of a war of aggression still exists, land-mines are a legitimate means of defence for many countries. Only when consideration is given to both humanitarian concerns and military needs in a balanced manner can we work out practicable and viable solutions to the problem of land-mines. It was in this spirit and taking into account the concerns of all sides as much as possible, that China participated in a positive and serious manner in the relevant negotiations of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on certain conventional weapons, and it has made its contributions in this regard. We hope that during the resumed session next year, the countries concerned will also be flexible and practical in seeking a just and equitable solution to the existing differences.

Mankind has experienced two global hot wars in the first half of this century and has lived in the shadow of a cold war for at least the past forty years — small wonder that the twentieth century has been described as the "century of wars". In five years' time, the world will ring in the twenty-first century. In order to make the coming century an era of peace and tranquillity, we are pressed with the tasks of further promoting the disarmament process and preserving world peace and security. China will continue to work with all other countries, and make its own contributions to the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and to the cause of peace for all mankind.

Mr. Calovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. You can count on my delegation's support and cooperation. I am sure that the Committee will be pleased with the results of the work under your chairmanship. I would like also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election to their posts.

The process of disarmament should be further advanced and developed in all its fields. It is the best preventive effort against future wars and the human tragedies that war brings, and it is the best means of further strengthening international security and all the benefits that peace brings to the development of world-wide cooperation. So, no efforts should be spared to remove the threats to peace and to prevent the occurrence of conflicts. If disarmament is seen in that perspective, it will gain much more in importance; it will become equally important for all countries, large or small, nuclear or non-nuclear, and it will make a much larger contribution to the maintenance of international security and to the efforts to achieve lasting global peace.

It is also extremely important to look at the process of disarmament as an important part of the other regional and global efforts for peace and development. The interdependence of all efforts against war, if followed with the required maturity, political determination and will to prevent conflicts and other human tragedies, will certainly make our actions more resolute and their results more productive. It is essential therefore to stress that many countries do not feel threatened by nuclear war, but are very much concerned for their security because of developments in their surroundings. For that reason the democratization of the process of disarmament, its transparency and all activities aimed at regional and global integration are essential to them and to their development.

This year the First Committee will work on many important issues of arms control and disarmament in an atmosphere conditioned by the results of this year's Review and Extension Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the urgency of the ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention; the difficulties involved in negotiating the comprehensive test-ban treaty; the developments with regard to nuclear tests, rather than owing to the difficulties involved in developing a global arms-control policy on conventional armaments; failure to stop conflicts and to prevent the occurrence of new ones and so on. It is clear that we will face many contradictory situations in our forthcoming deliberations. The way out will be through maintaining respect for our mutual interests, and applying the determination and political will to develop international relations and cooperation, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations set forth in the Charter. The observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations should influence us to take our deliberations in that direction.

Macedonia attaches the greatest importance to the development of good-neighbourly relations and considers them the most important generator of peace, security, cooperation and disarmament in all regions of the world, particularly in our region — the Balkans. The people of the Balkans deserve to live together in peace with one another as good neighbours. The duty and the interest of Europe is to integrate all of them into the European Community, as soon as possible. That would be the most important contribution to the maintenance of European and global security — but, first, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina must stop and a political solution to the conflict must be reached. We hope that that will be achieved sooner rather than later.

Under item 81 of our agenda — "Maintenance of international security" — the First Committee will deliberate on the Secretary-General's report on the development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States (A/50/412 and Add.1). The report contains the views of some Balkan States and of some others. It contains many interesting suggestions and important opinions. In the course of our discussions of specific subjects relating to international security agenda items, my delegation will speak at length on the subject of the development of good-neighbourly relations among the Balkan States.

Later we shall submit a draft resolution for consideration and adoption by the Committee. At this stage I should like to stress the following points: the development of good-neighbourly relations is the most important factor in the generation of peace and cooperation in the Balkans; every effort — national, regional and global — should be made to steer developments in that direction; further Balkanization of the Balkans is the most serious threat to security in Europe and globally; and it is interesting to note that it is no coincidence that the First World War started in the Balkans and that the Second World War lasted longest in the Balkans. Europeanization of the Balkans should not be delayed; the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina must stop, and a peaceful solution must be reached without delay; normalization of relations between all Balkan States is a must and should be helped and encouraged by the international community.

At this point I should like to stress the importance of the recently concluded accord between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece on their future relations. We are sure that the two countries will benefit equally from the accord and that it will have a beneficial effect on future developments in the Balkans.

Last year we underlined the importance of good and timely preparation for the current year's deliberations on this agenda item and on the duties of the Secretariat in that regard. I cannot say that we are pleased with what the Secretariat has prepared. The Secretary-General's report is a technical compilation of the answers received from some States, without its own input and without the views of so many competent international organizations that are daily preoccupied with current and future developments in the Balkans.

We hope that the Secretary-General's next report will contain the necessary input from him and from the many competent international organizations in the United Nations system and those outside the system, particularly in Europe. The thrust of resolution 48/84 B, the draft of which was adopted without a vote by this Committee in 1993, is transformation of the Balkans from a zone of conflict, a barrel-of-gunpowder zone, to a zone of peace and cooperation, as an essential ingredient of European integration.

Is this possible? Our answer to that question is in the affirmative.

This year, as in the past, deliberations on the question of stopping the proliferation of armaments — nuclear, chemical, conventional, and so on — will dominate our proceedings. The positive outcome of this year's Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT — the indefinite extension of the Treaty — represents the most important achievement of the disarmament process. The effort to make the Treaty universal should continue, in the hope of success in not-too-distant future. This achievement should encourage action on the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

We have been following closely the deliberations of the Conference on Disarmament on the banning of nuclear tests. The conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty remains a priority of the Conference on Disarmament, and we hope that the commitment to conclude such a treaty by the year 1996 will be honoured. In this regard, the position of the nuclear States is vital.

My delegation attaches high priority to the control of conventional armaments. Activities in this area of arms control can be of immense help in the confidence-building processes between many States. If this endeavour is to be successful it is essential that, in the field of conventional armaments, there be transparency in production, stockpiling and trading. Our region — the Balkans — is overstocked with all kinds of conventional armaments. We have to remember that future wars will be fought with conventional weapons. The fact is that it is not necessary to have atomic bombs to frighten neighbouring countries: modern conventional weapons are enough.

It is also a fact that it is not difficult to ascertain how much weaponry a country needs for legitimate purposes. If a country accumulates huge quantities of conventional weapons — more than is reasonable — one should normally become worried. The rational policy for the United Nations to advocate is the development of good neighbourly relations, arms control and transparency in armaments production, stockpiling and trading. A conventional arms race is as dangerous to international security as is the nuclear-arms race.

Strengthening collective security is also a good answer to the problem. In this regard we are witnessing positive developments in Europe. The current transformation process in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) could also enhance the forces of peace and cooperation in Europe — a good way of controlling developments in the area of conventional armaments. Here I should like to mention the importance to the future development of European security of implementing the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

My delegation shares the view that the Chemical Weapons Convention — the most important achievement so far in the field of disarmament — should be ratified by all States and that it should enter into force without delay.

We support the efforts aimed at banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as well as the early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention. We hope that the necessary negotiations will begin soon in the Conference on Disarmament. We also support the demand from non-nuclear-weapon States for binding security assurances. We are in favour of regional arms control and disarmament, and we support the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones as a means of enhancing global and regional peace and security.

Like many other delegations, my delegation attaches high priority to the question of de-mining. Mine clearance and reconstruction of the affected areas should be undertaken with the utmost urgency. In view of the tremendous humanitarian importance of this endeavour it is absolutely necessary that it be concluded successfully.

Before finishing my statement I should like to comment briefly on the question of expanding the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. With due respect to the Special Rapporteur and the Conference on Disarmament, my delegation shares the view of other delegations that the interest of many countries, including mine, in membership was not taken fully into account. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will find it possible to consider the issue further and to adopt a just solution.

I should like to end my statement by stressing that what really matters at present is preventing new conflicts and new wars and solving current ones by peaceful means. Here, preventive measures are the best formula. This will make arms control and disarmament an even higher priority and will make a significant contribution to strengthening international security and developing cooperative international relations. We therefore hope that in future the First Committee will be able to devote more time to international security matters.

Mr. Jele (South Africa): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, upon your assumption of the important office of Chairman of the First Committee at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodriguez of Ecuador, who guided us through our work at the forty-ninth session. We also wish to extend our congratulations to the other officers elected to important posts in the First Committee. The Chairman, the members of his Bureau and the Secretariat can count on my delegation's support and cooperation in the fulfilment of their duties.

Disarmament and non-proliferation have been a focus of attention for the international community during 1995. This is largely due to the attention given to the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty and the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Joseph Rotblat and the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs for the central role they have played in promoting the cause of nuclear disarmament is further evidence of this.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and is the foundation on which much of our work is based. When the NPT was adopted 25 years ago, it represented a major advance towards nuclear disarmament. The dramatic changes brought about by the end of the cold war have created a global environment in which it is possible to realize the NPT's basic objectives.

At the Review and Extension Conference, which was held here in New York during April and May, the NPT regime was reinforced by the adoption, without a vote, of the decisions on the strengthened review process and on the Principles and Objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The Principles and Objectives, especially those in the section dealing with nuclear disarmament, have a particular significance for the First Committee. In them it is noted that nuclear disarmament has been substantially facilitated by the easing of international tension and the strengthening of trust between States, factors which have prevailed since the end of the cold war. The States parties further undertook to fulfil with determination the NPT's nuclear disarmament undertakings, while the nuclear-weapon States also reaffirmed their commitment to negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. The measures outlined in the programme of action of the Principles and Objectives are important for the full realization and effective implementation of article VI of the Treaty. As we all know, the programme of action entails the completion of the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a cut-off convention, and the determined pursuit of nuclear, general and complete disarmament.

At the NPT Conference, and afterwards, a linkage was created between the indefinite extension of the Treaty, the strengthened review, and the principles and objectives. While this linkage might have been created by others for their own purposes, this was not the case in the proposal South Africa made to the Conference. In my delegation's view, the strengthened review and the Principles and Objectives were not intended as ends in themselves, nor were they intended as a compromise to achieve indefinite extension. They were intended as vehicles by means of which we could enter into a process leading to the achievement of the ultimate goals of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. If these decisions are to live up to their advance billing, then we will have to meet the original intentions, which were that the Principles and Objectives should be a yardstick by which all the States Parties could measure their non-proliferation and disarmament achievements; that they would be renewed periodically to ensure that they were dynamic and adapted to changing circumstances; and that they would be a lodestar which

would focus attention on the goals for which the States parties should strive.

The NPT Conference was also an important landmark on the way to our goal of achieving the universality of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In this context, I should like to recall my Foreign Minister's words when he addressed the NPT Conference:

> "Apartheid South Africa, as a part of its national security policy, embarked on a nuclear-weapons programme. Democratic South Africa sees its international and regional security being achieved by complete nuclear disarmament. The NPT provides us in Africa and the international community with greater security than did the nuclear weapons which we have destroyed. Southern Africa until very recently was in a state of conflict, war and destabilization, and nuclear weapons were thought to be providing security. I believe that the South African experience — namely, that security is provided by nuclear disarmament rather than by nuclear proliferation — is a telling one, not only for the threshold States but also for the acknowledged weapon States."

At the Review and Extension Conference, the nuclear-weapon States also undertook to exercise utmost restraint with respect to nuclear testing, pending the successful conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. My Government is therefore particularly perturbed that two nuclear-weapon States have, despite the undertaking they helped to negotiate at that Conference and in disregard of international concern and appeals to desist, proceeded to test nuclear weapons. South Africa strongly urges the States concerned to reconsider their nuclear testing policy and to join a global moratorium on nuclear testing.

At the same time, we wish to commend other nuclear-weapon States for their continued restraint in this regard and strongly urge them to continue honouring their commitment to a moratorium. A cessation of all nuclear testing will provide a favourable climate for the negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty before the end of 1996, as agreed in the principles and objectives.

South Africa takes great satisfaction at the progress that has been made with regard to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. The Organization of African Unity (OAU)/United Nations Group of Experts, which was very ably assisted by a member of the United Nations Disarmament Secretariat in Geneva, Mr. Sola Ogunbanwo, completed their task of preparing a text for the Treaty during a meeting in Johannesburg at the end of May. At the 62nd meeting of the Council of Ministers of the OAU, the Pelindaba text of the Treaty was adopted, on 23 June 1995. Africa attaches great importance to this Treaty, and the African Group will be submitting a resolution on the Treaty to the First Committee.

The Treaty is important, as it expands considerably the total area of nuclear-weapon-free zones and is a further step towards the final goal of complete nuclear disarmament. In this context, we also look forward to establishing cooperative arrangements with other nuclear-weapon-free zones in the southern hemisphere. Work should then begin on a treaty establishing Africa as a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction.

South Africa appeals to the nuclear-weapon States to give their support to the African treaty, and to ensure that the relevant protocols are signed as soon as they are available for signature. Here South Africa would also like to add its voice to the call on the nuclear-weapon States which have not yet signed the relevant Protocols of other nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties to do so as soon as possible. This would be a further step in the realization of the commitments which were undertaken at the NPT Conference, and will further strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

My country wishes to pay tribute to all those delegations which worked so hard in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to produce the current rolling text of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Immediately after the NPT Conference there was some concern that the work of the Conference on Disarmament was suffering from a post-NPT lethargy. The flexibility shown by many delegations, and especially the announcements by three nuclear-weapon States that they supported a truly comprehensive zero-yield nuclear-test ban was of fundamental importance to the work which has been done this year.

On the question of the scope of the treaty, the South African delegation at the Conference on Disarmament has made it clear that it favours a simple article based on article 1 of the partial test-ban Treaty. We do not think that a comprehensive test-ban treaty should include the concepts of peaceful nuclear explosions, safety tests or low-yield tests, all of which could be open to abuse, which could frustrate the purposes of a comprehensive test ban. South Africa sees a future treaty as an instrument both for non-proliferation and disarmament. Both these elements

must be reflected in the scope of a future comprehensive test-ban treaty. We therefore support the text of the "scope article", proposed by Australia, which is gaining widespread support in the Conference on Disarmament.

In the NPT Principles and Objectives, the States Parties to the Treaty decided that the completion by the Conference on Disarmament of the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty not later than 1996 was important in the full realization and effective implementation of article VI of the NPT. If this is to be achieved, it will then be necessary for the Conference on Disarmament to complete its work by the middle of next year so that the treaty can be available for signature during the General Assembly. It is vitally important that the deadline set in the Principles and Objectives should be strictly adhered to if we are to maintain the credibility of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and of the decisions taken at the NPT Conference.

My delegation also looks forward to the commencement of the negotiations for a convention prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We should like to pay tribute to Ambassador Shannon of Canada, whose tireless efforts led to agreement on a mandate for the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on a cut-off convention.

South Africa was probably one of the first States, at the end of the cold war, to cease production of fissile materials for weapons purposes when operations at its pilot enrichment plant were terminated early in 1990. Highly enriched uranium (HEU) had been produced at the plant for use as fuel in the production of isotopes as well as for nuclear weapons. The very same facility therefore produced HEU for both peaceful and military purposes, clearly illustrating the difficulties we can expect in verifying a "cut-off" convention. The plant has been regularly inspected by the International Atomic Energy Agency since November 1991 after South Africa acceded to the NPT and implemented a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency.

In our opinion, the purpose of a cut-off convention would be to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and to provide a prohibition on the production of nuclear material for weapons purposes through a binding legal and internationally verifiable commitment. The main undertakings in a "cut-off" convention would be: to terminate production operations and to refrain from any further production of fissile materials intended for explosive devices; to refrain from providing assistance in producing fissile materials for proscribed purposes to any other State; and to accept non-discriminatory international safeguards to verify these undertakings.

On 13 September 1995 South Africa became the thirty-seventh State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The ratification of the CWC again underlines my Government's commitment to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. South Africa strongly favours the early entry into force of this global disarmament agreement, which will ban an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

As current Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), South Africa's Ambassador to the Netherlands is taking active steps to encourage the ratification of the Convention. South Africa, together with many other States parties to this important disarmament treaty, firmly believes that ratification by the countries which have stockpiles of these weapons is important, because many States look to those countries to take the lead before depositing their own instruments of ratification.

South Africa is also participating in the work of the Ad Hoc Group of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention which was established by the 1994 Special Conference of States Parties. The work which is being done in the Ad Hoc Group to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Treaty by, *inter alia*, establishing effective verification measures is a high priority for my Government and integral to its policy on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

South Africa also acceded to the inhumane weapons Convention on 13 September 1995. We believe that the universality of that Convention is an objective for which we should all strive and urge all States to accede to the Convention as soon as possible. South Africa's accession to the Convention emphasizes my Government's commitment to the elimination of the suffering which is caused by the scourge of war and other armed conflicts; to the promotion of international peace and security; and to our responsibility to implement arms control policies as a means to this end. South Africa has, for this reason, decided to extend its moratorium on the export of land-mines by the introduction of a permanent ban on the export or sale of long-lived anti-personnel land-mines. We regret that the Review Conference in Vienna was unable to achieve a revised

Protocol II and we call on all the States parties to work for a successful conclusion of the meeting when it is reconvened next year.

South Africa's Government of National Unity is also very concerned about the proliferation of other conventional arms. It is conventional weapons which are being used to create the devastation in Rwanda, Somalia, Afghanistan and the former Yugoslavia. The illicit transfer of arms is also of major concern in the southern African region. To address these concerns the South African Cabinet approved the draft of a new conventional arms control policy on 30 August 1995. A National Conventional Arms Control Committee has been established and will function in accordance with the guiding principles and criteria to ensure arms trade and transfers conform to accepted international practice.

During the forty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 49/77 B on the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. In that resolution the Assembly recalled the report of the Special Coordinator for membership designated by the Conference, Ambassador O'Sullivan of Australia, and the subsequent statement made by the Special Coordinator on 26 August 1993, recommending a dynamic solution to the question of membership. The Conference on Disarmament was also urged by the General Assembly to make every effort to reach a solution resulting, by the beginning of 1995, in a significant expansion of its composition, which would include at least 60 countries.

South Africa believed that resolution 49/77 B was particularly important because the Conference on Disarmament is the only forum of the international community for the negotiation of multilateral disarmament treaties. It is therefore essential that its composition reflect present-day realities and not the bygone divisions of the cold war.

Some progress has been made in the implementation of the resolution through the untiring efforts of Ambassador Benjelloun of Morocco, the current President of the Conference on Disarmament. The decision which has now been taken by the Conference merely adopts the O'Sullivan report on the composition of the Conference while stating only that the new members will assume membership at the earliest possible date, which is still to be decided by the Conference. The South African Government calls on the Conference on Disarmament to implement its decision of 21 September 1995 on the expansion of membership by the beginning of its next session in January 1996.

Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand): On behalf of the delegation of Thailand and as a colleague of yours here, I wish to congratulate you most warmly, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that, under your able guidance, the work of the First Committee will be fruitful and successful. It is with this confidence that I should like to assure you of my delegation's readiness to render its full cooperation to you and the other members of the Bureau in our undertakings during the next few months.

In this connection, I should also like to express my deepest appreciation for the capable manner in which your predecessor, Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodriguez of Ecuador, presided over the Committee last year. Under the leadership of Ambassador Rodriguez, notable progress was achieved by the First Committee and a sound basis provided for our work this year.

Since the last session, there have been mixed signals of encouraging and discouraging developments. In the realm of nuclear disarmament, we are witnessing progress in the efforts towards the implementation of START I, which entered into force in December 1994; brighter prospects for the ratification of START II; the conclusion of START III; renewed enthusiasm in the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty; and, of course, the conclusion of the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). On the other hand, we are also witnessing disappointing developments, such as the continued existence of a nuclear threat against humanity, the resumption of nuclear tests by nuclear-weapon States and the apparent possibility of nuclear proliferation to other non-nuclear-weapon States and groups of peoples who seek to obtain their political objectives through violent means.

As a non-nuclear State party to the NPT, Thailand is particularly disappointed and saddened by the decision of nuclear-weapon States to resume nuclear testing, in defiance of world public opinion, in the very year in which the NPT has been extended indefinitely. In May 1995, the international community decided to adopt, without a vote, the indefinite extension of the NPT at the urging of nuclear-weapon States themselves, in the expectation that this decision would help remove the shadow of the nuclear threat which has loomed over the peoples of this planet for the past 50 years.

For my delegation, the nuclear tests, all of which happened to take place in the Asia-Pacific region, clearly

violate the spirit of the NPT and the decision of the NPT Review Conference on Principles and Objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Thailand wishes to join all others that have urged these nuclear-weapon States to observe the global moratorium on nuclear testing. My delegation would also appreciate any service that other nuclear- weapon States could render in reversing the situation. In this connection, my delegation would like to appeal to all nuclear-weapon States to live up to their Treaty obligations, particularly those provided by Article VI of the NPT, and to work towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

As a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand firmly believes that all efforts should be made to alleviate and eventually eliminate the nuclear threat. For this reason, since the early 1980s, as a contribution to global efforts, my country and its fellow ASEAN members have been working towards the establishment of a South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone. In recent years, remarkable progress has been achieved and it is hoped that the treaty on such a nuclear-weapon-free zone will soon be completed and be ready for signature at the fifth ASEAN Summit Meeting in Thailand in December this year.

Despite the desire of the world community to see the complete elimination of chemical weapons, these inhumane weapons of mass destruction still exist and continue to be developed so that they can inflict greater harm and suffering on the human race. The recent gas attack against innocent subway commuters in Tokyo proved that these abhorrent weapons can be as effective in battlefields as they are in the very heart of a cosmopolitan city. No one is safe from their destructive power. It is for this reason that Thailand is in full support of an effective and universal Chemical Weapons Convention. Thailand believes that, given the necessary political will and support, the Convention will be able to bring us a step closer to a world without chemical weapons. In this connection, I am pleased to inform this meeting that, at present, steps are being taken in my own country, Thailand, to ratify the Convention, after which we would join with others in anticipating its early implementation.

In a related area, Thailand welcomes the important decision of the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention in 1994 to establish an Ad Hoc Group to consider appropriate means to strengthen the Convention, including possible verification measures. Thailand welcomes this important step, provided that the work of the Ad Hoc Group and the implementation of the Convention take into account the need to protect sensitive commercial proprietary information and the legitimate national security needs of individual countries.

One way that we can facilitate and assist the process of disarmament is to disseminate information on disarmament as widely as possible in order to promote public awareness of the need for disarmament. In this connection, my delegation is in full support of the United Nations disarmament campaign and related activities, as well as the work of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in various parts of the world. In particular, Thailand appreciates the initiatives, programmes and activities for peace and disarmament provided by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, with its headquarters in Kathmandu. Over the years, the activities of the Centre have helped to promote and encourage the development of effective confidence-building measures and have greatly facilitated the function of the United Nations in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. Thailand would like to pledge its continued support and willingness to participate in the ongoing important work carried out by the Centre.

Thailand wishes to re-emphasize that, in the area of conventional arms disarmament, openness and transparency in the transfer of these weapons are greatly needed. In 1991, Thailand was one of the 150 Member States to vote in support of resolution 46/36 L on transparency in armaments. Since 1994, Thailand has been providing information to the United Nations Conventional Arms Register in accordance with that resolution. My delegation is confident that only the universal and non-discriminatory application of this regime will result in a more transparent and truly global disarmament in conventional arms.

It has been over a decade that Thailand, as a neighbour to a country at war, has had to confront the uncontrollable menace of land mines and their devastating and crippling effects. These lethal and destructive weapons have not only caused the loss of life and property among the Thai population, but have also rendered unusable large areas of Thai territory. Through an intensive and continuous mine clearance programme, the situation has greatly improved. However, much remains to be done before the problem can be completely solved.

As a land mine-affected country, Thailand does not manufacture or export land mines. My delegation therefore support relevant United Nations resolutions on assistance in mine clearance and the moratorium on the export of

anti-personnel mines. We also note with appreciation the efforts of the United Nations in drawing up a comprehensive mine clearance programme, in launching mine awareness activities, and, more importantly, in establishing the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for land mine-affected countries. My delegation, however, would like to emphasize that international assistance for this purpose should be non-selective and be obtainable by all countries and peoples who are victims of land-mines.

The dramatic increase in the number of conflicts and disputes in various parts of the world during the past few years has posed a new challenge to the ability of United Nations peace-keeping operations and multilateral efforts to maintain international peace and security. My delegation is convinced that, in order to enable the United Nations and the international community to meet this challenge, new thinking on the role of United Nations peace-keeping operations should be developed. Consideration should be given to the practicality, usefulness, and cost-effectiveness of each operation.

My delegation also believes that regional cooperation could do much to complement and assist global efforts in conflict resolution, conflict prevention, and confidence-building. Because of this belief, in 1994 Thailand and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) created the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) with the aim of promoting peace and security for the Asia-Pacific region. As a consultative forum involving 18 countries from the Asia-Pacific region and the European Union, the ARF has increasingly proved to be a useful vehicle for confidence-building in the area and has served as a viable model for regional political cooperation. At its second meeting in Brunei Darussalam in August this year, in particular, the importance of concepts such as amity and cooperation in South-East Asia, peace and cooperation in the South China Sea and the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia were emphasized. Thailand hopes that, in the years ahead, the participants in the ARF will continue to build on these concepts in order to help ensure a more stable, secure and peaceful Asia-Pacific region, thus contributing to United Nations efforts at the global level.

Much has been accomplished during the past year. Yet, much remains to be done in the area of international peace and security at this session of the General Assembly and beyond. As we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, my delegation believes that this current session provides us with an excellent opportunity not only to re-examine the successes and failures of the United Nations in the areas of general and complete disarmament and the strengthening of international peace and security, but also to renew our commitment to the goals and objectives of United Nations efforts in these areas.

The Chairman: I have received a request from two delegations to speak in exercise of their right of reply.

I should point out that the rules regarding rights of reply that were invoked yesterday will continue to apply.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) *(interpretation from French)*: Several delegations have referred to the question of nuclear tests. One did so in unacceptable language. These statements prompt the French delegation to place the last series of tests carried out by France in the framework of the final and complete ban on nuclear tests. Our purpose is, as soon as possible in 1996, to achieve the conclusion of a treaty that would ban all nuclear-weapons tests or any other nuclear explosion.

The major problem is the scope of such a treaty. As members know, France was the first to announce, on 10 August last at the Conference on Disarmament, that we endorse this objective and this formulation. This choice is a matter of extreme importance. It is the choice of the zero option.

The attacks levelled at France are unfounded. Contrary to what some have said, this campaign is entirely in accordance with the law and with the commitments undertaken by France. The extreme restraint that we have displayed signifies neither interdiction nor suspension, and we have never excluded the possibility of completing this series of tests.

Furthermore, France is carrying out the minimum number of tests strictly required for the security and viability of its weaponry, as with the independent acquisition of simulation technology. We include non-proliferation among the priorities of our international activities, and it is in this spirit that we actively strove for the unconditional and unlimited extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995.

Finally, France reaffirms its attachment to the ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament, to which it has subscribed, in particular in the context of article VI of the NPT. We have taken major unilateral measures to reduce our arsenal, which are all the more important in that, as

everyone knows, this arsenal is maintained at the level of strict sufficiency by comparison with others.

In conclusion, I should like to note that certain delegations have referred to the scenario of an immediate cessation of tests. This leads the French delegation to emphasize that such a scenario for the immediate -- I stress, immediate -- cessation of tests could not be applied to France. Lastly, this recent campaign was necessary for the signing of a treaty, which we hope to conclude next autumn, that would ban nuclear tests. That seems to be the common objective sought by the General Assembly.

Mr. Stephanou (Greece): I did not wish to speak on a point of order so as not to interrupt the statement made today by the delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. That is why I am availing myself of my delegation's right of reply.

In connection with the incorrect naming of the State in question used in that statement, I should like to recall Security Council resolution 817 (1993), according to which that State was admitted to the United Nations,

> "being provisionally referred to for all purposes within the United Nations, as 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' pending settlement of the difference that has arisen over the name of the State" *(resolution 817 (1993), para. 2)*.

This difference has not yet been settled.

Mr. Calovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): Before I reply to the statement of the representative of Greece, I should like to stress that the relations between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece have begun to develop very satisfactorily for both sides. Everything indicates that in future they will be very fruitful. I take pleasure in noting such a positive situation developing between our countries and in the southern part of the Balkans.

The interpretation of Security Council resolution 817 (1993) by the representative of Greece is not correct. Resolution 817 (1993) makes no mention of the name of my country or of any obligation by my Government to use the reference mentioned in that resolution. There is no decision by any United Nations organ or any other international organ that obliges us not to use our constitutional name. We are doing this now and will be doing the same in future. As a matter of fact, we will always use our constitutional name, which is, as members know, the Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Stephanou (Greece): The representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has given his own interpretation. I should like to mention that there is no question of interpreting Security Council resolution 817 (1993), as its text is self-explanatory. If it were interpreted to imply that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia could be referred to otherwise, the resolution would have been devoid of any meaning.

Mr. Calovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I should just like to repeat that in my statement, I used the name of my country, which is the Republic of Macedonia. As I mentioned earlier, Security Council resolution 817 (1993) does not oblige us not to use our constitutional name. The situation is clear. If we would like to complicate it, we can.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.